

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES



The Division of Nutritional Health and Services

Nutrition in Focus

Early Adulthood (18-35 Years)

Although the basic nutritional needs of young adults are constant, certain factors need to be considered to achieve and maintain optimal nutritional status. These factors include activity level; pregnancy and parenthood; psychology; and environment. Approximately 84.3% percent of all children are born to adults at this stage of life. Therefore, young adults require a knowledge base that enables them to make choices about nutrition and physical activity that are appropriate for their gender and circumstances.

What are the consequences of poor nutrition?

- ⇒ The risk of obesity and chronic diseases is increased by unhealthy eating and sedentary lifestyles.
- ⇒ Reduced productivity and lowered resistance to acute infections can be a result of poor nutrition.
- ⇒ Alcohol increases the risk of an inadequate diet, dehydration, low blood sugar, and infertility.

What are we doing?

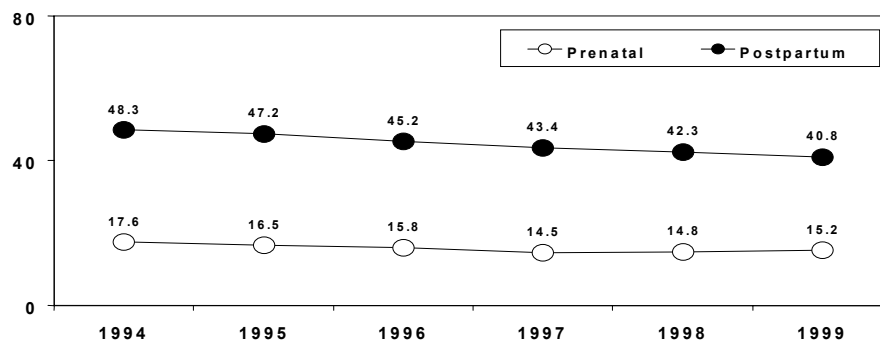
- ⇒ Assuring access to nutritious food for vulnerable adults through WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). (*Assurance*)
- ⇒ Educating teachers, nutritionists, and community-based educators to provide more effective nutrition education. (*Assurance*)
- ⇒ Promoting healthy behaviors through public information avenues, such as the *Eat for Health* and the *5-A-Day for Better Health* Campaigns. (*Assurance*)

- ⇒ Monitoring pregnant and post-partum women enrolled in WIC for nutritional health risks. *(Assessment)*
- ⇒ Designing a population-based monitoring and surveillance system that will assess the nutritional health status of all Missourians, regardless of age or income level. *(Assessment)*

How are we doing?

- ⇒ The prevalence of anemia among post-partum women in WIC decreased from 48.3% in 1994 to 40.8% in 1999. (Pregnancy Nutrition Surveillance System).
- ⇒ The same data however, show that we are not doing as well among the prenatal women enrolled in WIC as the percentage is steadily rising since 1997.

Figure 25. Percent of anemia among prenatal and Postpartum women in the Missouri PNSS, 1994-1999



What more can we do?

- ⇒ Continually seek effective and creative methods to communicate nutrition messages to young adults and families in a variety of forums - school, church, the workplace, and recreational venues.
- ⇒ Assure that disadvantaged adults and families have access to adequate nutrition and health services.
- ⇒ Assess regularly and systematically the nutritional status of young adults in Missouri, and develop policies and programs to address unmet needs.

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
Division of Nutritional Health and Services
930 Wildwood, P.O. Box 570
Jefferson City, MO 65109
(573) 526-5520